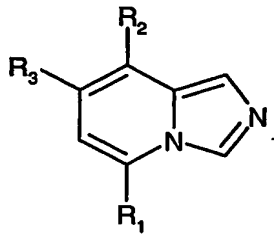
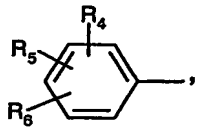
What is claimed is:

1. A compound of the formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R_1 is cycloalkyl, heterocyclyl or an aryl radical of the formula  in which

R_4 is cycloalkyl, aryl or heterocyclyl; or

R_4 is optionally substituted alkyl, alkoxy, hydroxy, halogen or trifluoromethyl provided that both R_5 and R_6 are not hydrogen;

R_5 is hydrogen, halogen, cyano, alkoxy or trifluoromethyl; or

R_4 and R_5 combined together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form an optionally substituted aromatic or heteroaromatic 5- or 6-membered ring provided that R_4 and R_5 are attached to carbon atoms adjacent to each other; or

R_4 and R_5 combined are alkylene which taken together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form a 4- to 7-membered ring provided that R_4 and R_5 are attached to carbon atoms adjacent to each other;

R_6 is hydrogen, halogen, cyano, nitro, trifluoromethyl, optionally substituted lower alkyl, optionally substituted amino, alkoxy, carboxy, alkoxycarbonyl, sulfonyl or carbamoyl;

R_2 and R_3 are, independently, hydrogen, trifluoromethyl or alkoxy; or

R_2 and R_3 combined together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form an optionally substituted aromatic or heteroaromatic 5- or 6-membered ring; or

R_2 and R_3 combined are alkylene which taken together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form a 4- to 7-membered ring;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

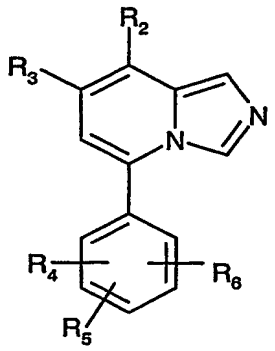
2. A compound according to claim 1, wherein

R_1 is heterocyclyl;

R_2 and R_3 are hydrogen;

or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

3. A compound according to claim 1 of the formula (IA)



(IA)

wherein

R_2 and R_3 are, independently, hydrogen, trifluoromethyl or alkoxy; or

R_2 and R_3 combined together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form an optionally substituted aromatic or heteroaromatic 5- or 6-membered ring; or

R_2 and R_3 combined are alkylene which taken together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form a 4- to 7-membered ring;

R_4 is cycloalkyl, aryl or heterocyclyl; or

R_4 is optionally substituted alkyl, alkoxy, hydroxy, halogen or trifluoromethyl provided that both R_5 and R_6 are not hydrogen;

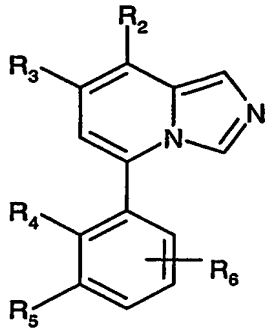
R_5 is hydrogen, halogen, cyano, alkoxy or trifluoromethyl; or

R_4 and R_5 combined together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form an optionally substituted aromatic or heteroaromatic 5- or 6-membered ring provided that R_4 and R_5 are attached to carbon atoms adjacent to each other;

R_6 is hydrogen, halogen, cyano, nitro, trifluoromethyl, optionally substituted lower alkyl, optionally substituted amino, alkoxy, carboxy, alkoxycarbonyl, sulfonyl or carbamoyl;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

4. A compound according to claim 3 of the formula (IB)



(IB)

wherein

R_2 and R_3 are, independently, hydrogen, trifluoromethyl or alkoxy; or

R_2 and R_3 combined together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form aromatic or heteroaromatic 5- to 6-membered ring;

R_4 is cycloalkyl, aryl or heterocyclyl; or

R_4 is hydroxy, halogen or trifluoromethyl provided that both R_5 and R_6 are not hydrogen;

R_5 is hydrogen, halogen, cyano, alkoxy or trifluoromethyl; or

R_4 and R_5 combined together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form an optionally substituted aromatic or heteroaromatic 5- or 6-membered ring;

R_6 is hydrogen, halogen, cyano, nitro, trifluoromethyl, optionally substituted lower alkyl, optionally substituted amino, alkoxy, carboxy, alkoxycarbonyl, sulfonyl or carbamoyl;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

5. A compound according to claim 4, wherein

R_2 and R_3 are hydrogen;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

6. A compound according to claim 4, wherein

R_4 is monocyclic aryl or heteroaryl;

R_5 is hydrogen;

R_6 is hydrogen, halogen, cyano, trifluoromethyl or alkoxy;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

7. A compound according to claim 4, wherein

R_4 and R_5 combined together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form an optionally substituted aromatic or heteroaromatic 5- or 6-membered ring;

R_6 is hydrogen, halogen, cyano, trifluoromethyl or alkoxy;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

8. A compound according to claim 1 which is selected from:

5-Naphthalen-1-yl-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine;

5-Biphenyl-4-yl-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine;

5-Biphenyl-2-yl-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine;

5-Benzofuran-3-yl-imidazo[1,5-a]pyridine; and

4-Imidazo[1,5-a]pyridin-5-yl-3,6-dihydro-*2H*-pyridine-1-carboxylic acid benzyl ester;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

9. A method for the inhibition of aldosterone synthase activity in mammals which method comprises administering to a mammal in need thereof a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 1.

10. A method for the prevention and/or treatment of conditions associated with aldosterone synthase activity in mammals which method comprises administering to a mammal in need thereof a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 1.

11. The method according to claim 10, which method comprises administering said compound in combination with a therapeutically effective amount of anti-obesity agent, anti-hypertensive agent, inotropic agent or hypolipidemic agent.

12. A method for the prevention and/or treatment of conditions associated with aldosterone synthase activity in mammals which method comprises administering to a mammal in need thereof a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 4.

13. A method for the treatment of hypokalemia, hypertension, congestive heart failure, renal failure, in particular, chronic renal failure, restenosis, atherosclerosis, syndrome X, obesity, nephropathy, post-myocardial infarction, coronary heart diseases, increased formation of collagen, fibrosis and remodeling following hypertension and endothelial

dysfunction, which method comprises administering to a mammal in need thereof a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 1.

14. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 1 in combination with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers.

15. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 1 in combination with a therapeutically effective amount of anti-obesity agent, anti-hypertensive agent, inotropic agent or hypolipidemic agent.

16. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 14 or 15 for the treatment of hypokalemia, hypertension, congestive heart failure, atherosclerosis, coronary heart diseases, post myocardial infarction, restenosis, increased formation of collagen, fibrosis, and remodeling following hypertension, endothelial dysfunction, renal failure, nephropathy, syndrome X and obesity.

17. A combination, comprising a compound of claim 1 and another therapeutic agent selected from an anti-obesity agent, anti-hypertensive agent, inotropic agent or hypolipidemic agent.

18. A compound according to any one of claims 1 to 8, for use as a medicament.

19. A combination according to claim 17, for use as a medicament.

20. Use of a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 8, or a combination according to claim 17, for the preparation of a pharmaceutical composition for the prevention and/or treatment of conditions associated with aldosterone synthase activity.

21. Use according to claim 20, wherein the conditions associated with aldosterone synthase activity are selected from hypokalemia, hypertension, congestive heart failure, renal failure, in particular, chronic renal failure, restenosis, atherosclerosis, syndrome X, obesity, nephropathy, post-myocardial infarction, coronary heart diseases, increased formation of collagen, fibrosis and remodeling following hypertension and endothelial dysfunction.